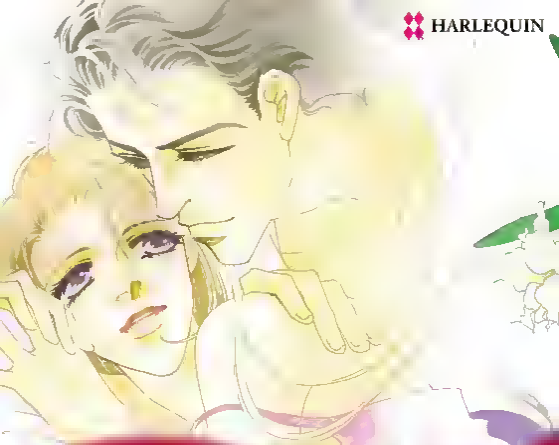


HARLEQUIN

The Italian's Token Wife

Kazuko Fujita

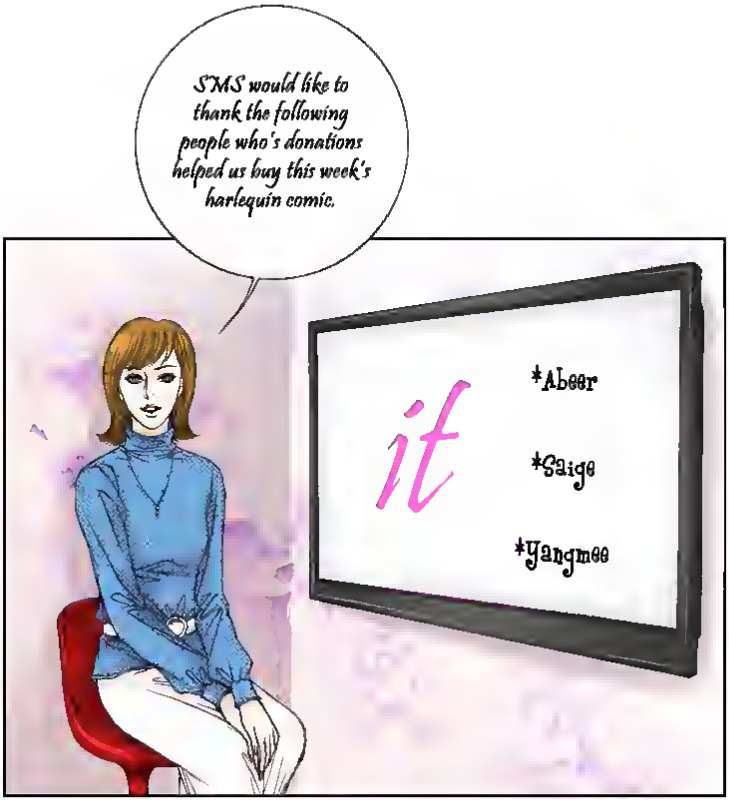
Original Text by Julia James

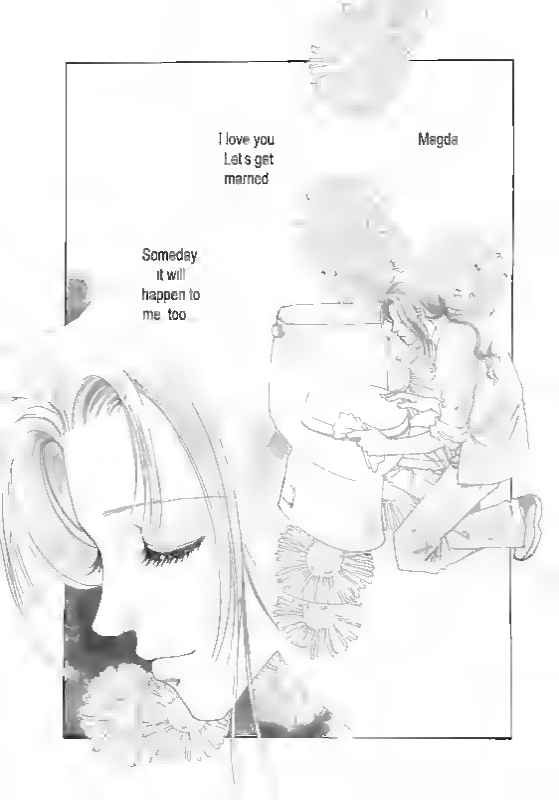
shojomanhwascans.blogspot.com

Credits

Editor

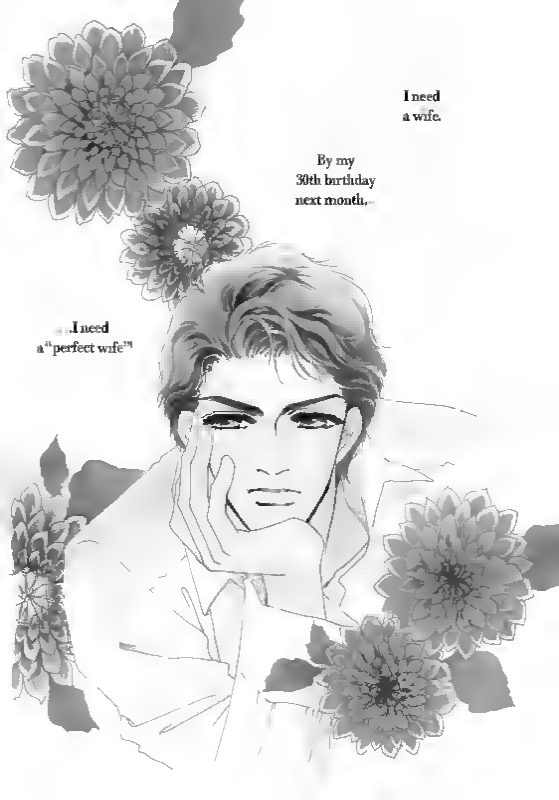
Nawelh


SMS would like to thank the following people who's donations helped us buy this week's harlequin comic.
if
*Abeer
*Saige
*Yangmee


I love you
Let's get
married
Magda
Someday
it will
happen to
me too

Kazuko Fujita
Original Text by Julia James
Token Wife

The Italian's

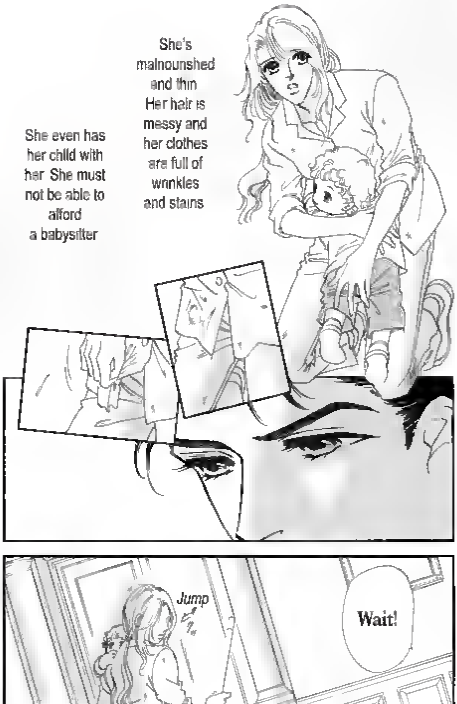

I need
a wife.
By my
30th birthday
next month,
...I need
a "perfect wife"!

You won't marry me?
Why not?
London
Oh, I'll marry you, Rafaello.
I just don't care for those silly conditions.
Silly? You agree!
I need a wife!
It only has to be for 3 months. Then we can divorce.
There's plenty of money in it for you, for such a simple request!
Scowl
Smile
Double it
She's taking advantage!

It's very, very, very expensive!
No! That's not a toy!
Benji!
Alice!

Who's there?
What are you doing?
Gasp
I can't take my eyes off Benji for an instant!
I'll have to look for new work soon

I didn't think a man like this could really exist
He... He's so beautiful
You're the cleaner?
I was told you were out, so I came to clean.
I'm sorry. I'll leave immediately
She's so squalid

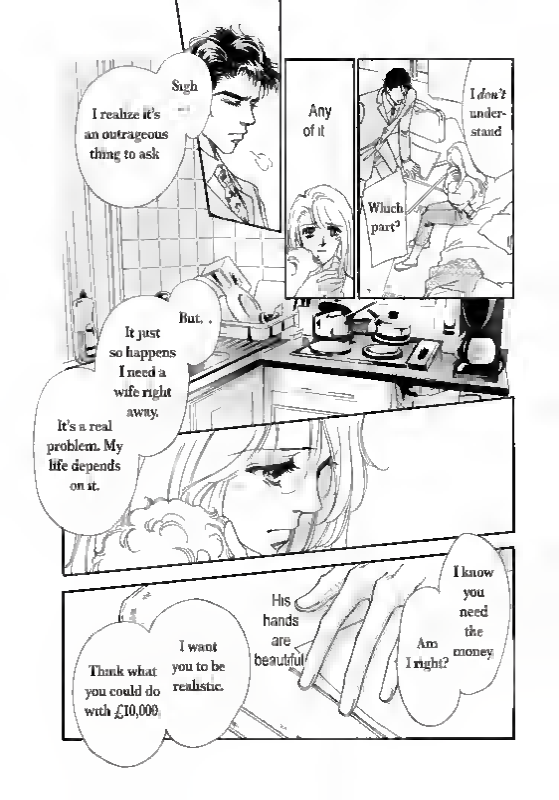

She's malnourished and thin Her hair is messy and her clothes are full of wrinkles and stains
She even has her child with her She must not be able to afford a babysitter
Jump
Wait!

I might have work for you Let's talk in the back.
No
Wh-What is this!
The child's father?
N-No
Are you married?
He's gone.
A boy-friend, then?
Work? In the back? What is he talking about?
Excuse me!
You must be kidding !
Pourff

Ms. Jones!
It's for your own good! As your social worker.
Put Benji up for adoption?
Not this again! I told you no!
Pour
Shut up you old nag!
Gasp
But what's best for Benji...?
I won't give Benji up
It might be hard to make a living
but Benji is my life Being with him makes me happy
Chew

Knock
Knock
Ms. Jones.
I want to continue our earlier conversation. Please let me in.
This voice it can't be
Oh no I let him in without thinking
Hi Thank you
Please sit down.
Um... How did you find me?
I asked at your cleaning agency.
I don't have much time, so I'll be brief.
I'm Rafaello Di Viscenti.
M
Will you marry me?

10
The job pays £10,000.
Naturally, your expenses will be covered.
However, it's only for 6 months.
We'll be officially married
meet my family at my home in Italy
and get divorced after 6 months.
That's all you have to do for £10,000
How about it?
If you understand, sign this.
Flap


Sigh
I realize it's an outrageous thing to ask
Any of it
I don't understand
Which part?
But. .
It just so happens I need a wife right away.
It's a real problem. My life depends on it.
I know you need the money
Am I right?
His hands are beautiful
I want you to be realistic.
Thank what you could do with £10,000

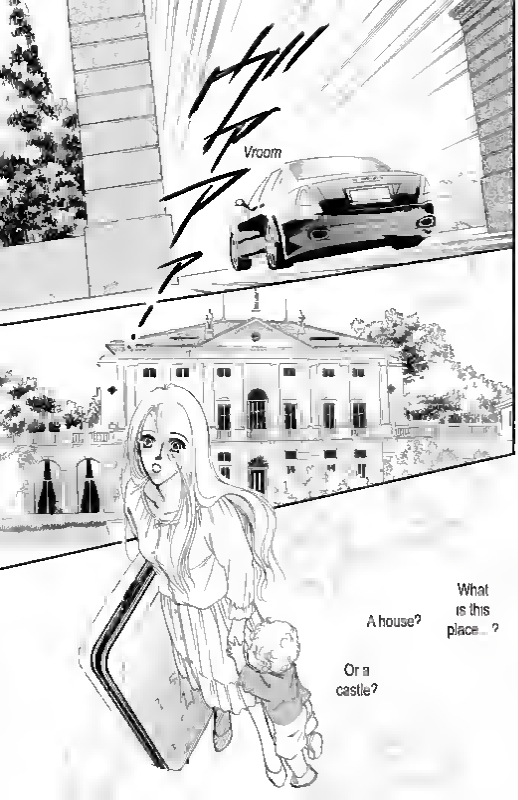
His voice is soft
You could leave here and buy a home outside of London.
You can find a new job.
You won't have to clean other peoples toilets anymore.
He smells good and his suit doesn't have a single wrinkle
More then anything
No one could look away from him
his beautiful black eyes

Why me?
Please, get out of my apartment
Before I succumb to temptation
To the £10,000
Ms. Jones'
To him
Will your son be happy, living like this?
Anyone you asked would marry you.
So why me? I don't trust you

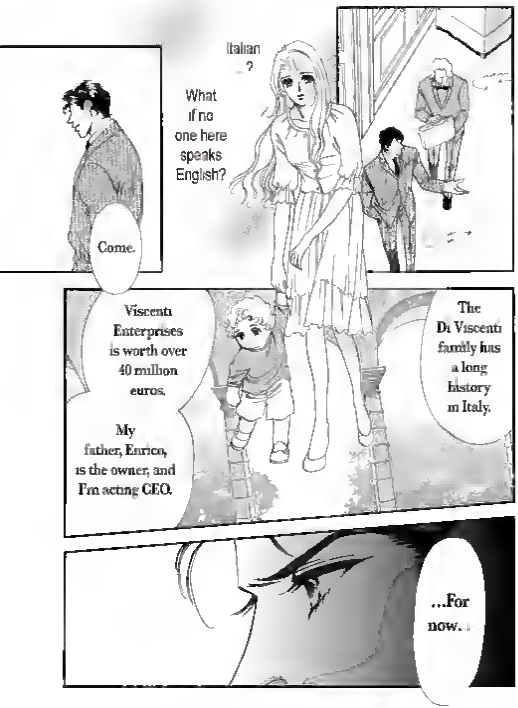
Gasp
My son
Benji
My darling Benji...
That's right. Think of your son.
Fwoosh

Is this a private jet. ?
Planes aren t normally like this are they ?
He s acting so nonchalant, but ...
..I pronounce you husband and wife
What am I doing?
Is this the right thing to do?
Maybe ... I've made a terrible mistake...

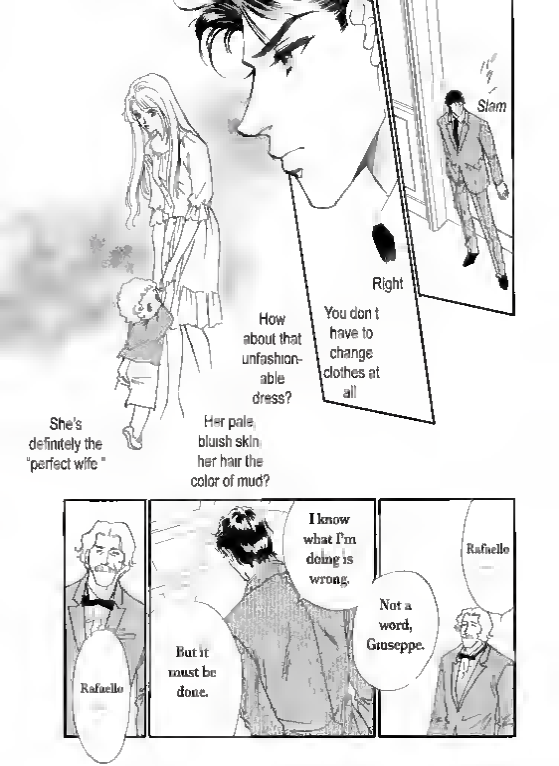
Tuscany, Italy
Oh Benji
... I hope everything will be all right
It's Italy, Benji!
Jiii


Vroom
What is this place...?
A house?
Or a castle?

It's like I've wandered into a fairy tale
Amazing
This way.
S-Sorry
...Mr Viscenti.
You can't get it wrong
You're Signora Di Viscenti now
Di Vis-centi.


Come.
What if no one here speaks English?
Italian ...?
Visconti Enterprises is worth over 40 million euros.
My father, Enrico, is the owner, and I'm acting CEO.
The Di Visconti family has a long history in Italy.
...For now...

O... Okay...
Make yourselves at home.
This is your room.
At home ?
Everything looks so expensive
I can't even sit down
Okay
Oh, you don't have to change clothes.
Get some rest. I'll come pick you up later.
O-Okay
Clunk
If you need anything, tell Giuseppe, the butler.

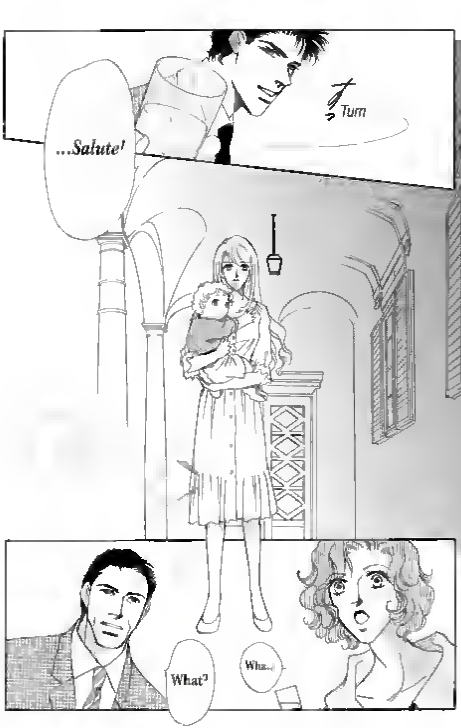

Slam
Right
You don't have to change clothes at all
How about that unfashionable dress?
Her pale, bluish skin, her hair the color of mud?
She's definitely the "perfect wife."
Rafaello
But it must be done.
I know what I'm doing is wrong.
Not a word, Guseppe.
Rafaello

Lucia! It's been a while.
Rafa-ello!
I flew over when I heard you were coming from London.
So the prodigal son returns—
Tomorrow is my 30th birthday, after all
Yes, Father—
I'm sure—you haven't forgotten our deal?

The deal...
I remember.
I thought you'd run out on it, though.
If I'm married by the age of 30...
...you turn over the company to me.
Right?
Or...
...you sell your shares to me if you're not.
It was the only way to get you married.
You even have a beauty like this lying around
Oh, stop!

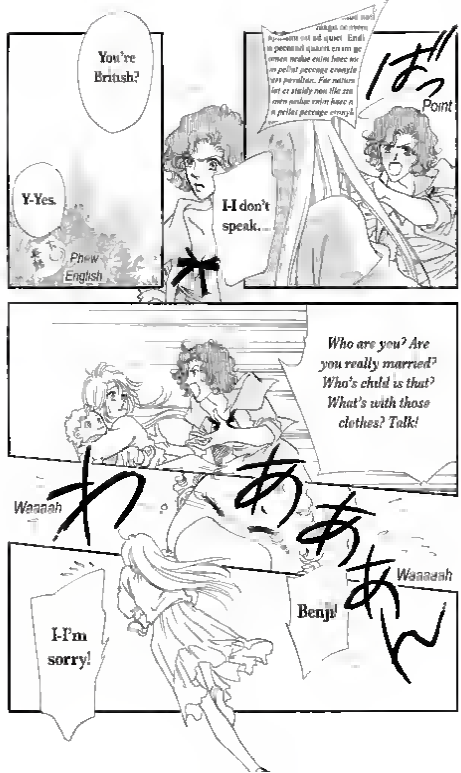
Yes I have
Hmph.
He's worked night and day to expand the company.
Don't scold Rafaello, Uncle.
But you want to take it all away from me !
I worked my fingers to the bone developing it into one of the top corporations in the European market
Father's traditional style of business would have put our 100-year-old company out of business in this new age
If you don't, I'll buy you out and you get nothing!
Get married by the age of 30 and have an heir
Lucia is enough of a distant relative to make a good wife

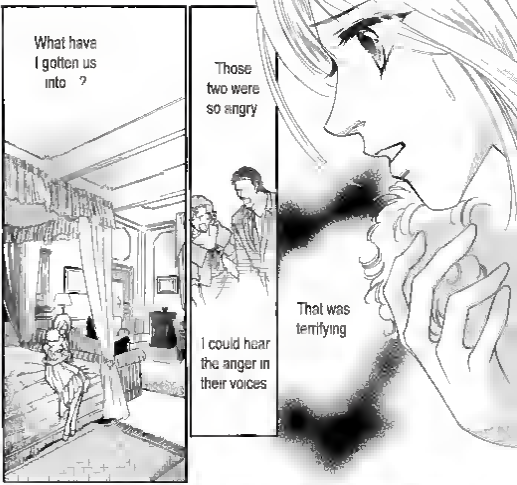
You mean...
Oh, my...
I'll make you regret making that deal with me!
She may fool my father, but I see through her
She's greedy conceited and a sadist
Except, I won't be marrying Lucia
I'll be married, as promised
I've even brought champagne, to celebrate.
A toast.
To my wife

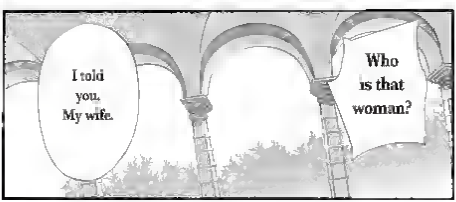

Turn
...Salute!
What?
Wha...

Allow me to introduce you.
This is my wife, Signora Di Visconti
We were married in London a week ago.
Rustle

なんの真似よ
このばか息子
What do you think you're doing you stupid brat!
I didn't
How can you be married to her and not me you selfish
妻だとおおおお
This is your wife?
What? What's going on? What are they saying?
Waaaaah!
Eep!


You're British?
Y-Yes.
Phew English
I-I don't speak...
Point
Who are you? Are you really married? Who's child is that? What's with those clothes? Talk!
Waaaah
Waaaah
Benji
I-I'm sorry!

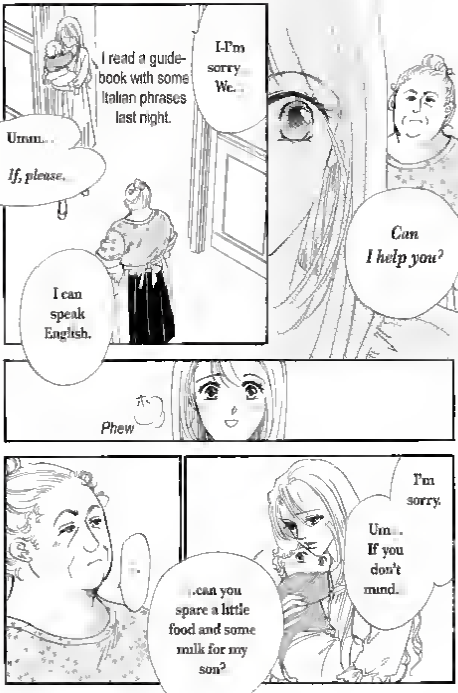

What have I gotten us into ?
Those two were so angry
I could hear the anger in their voices
That was terrifying


I told you, My wife.
Who is that woman?

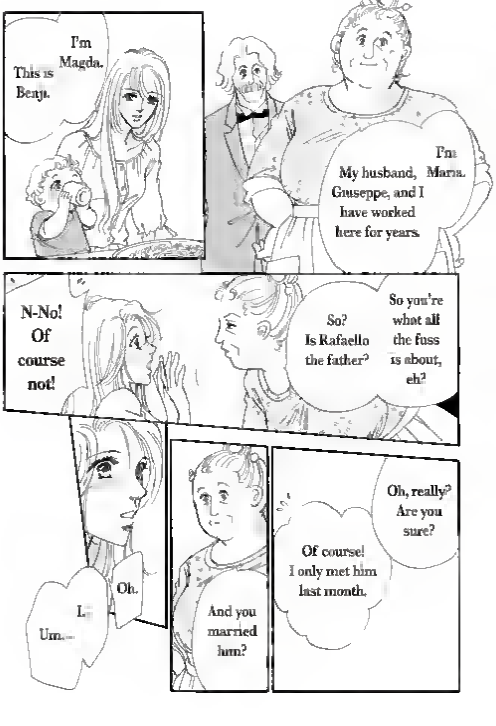
She was cleaning the toilet.
I met her at my London flat last month.
I don't know who the father is.
Yes. She was a single mother.
She had a child with her.
The t...
You're an idiot!
Yes, I am. She's the worst possible wife for me.
But she was still a far better alternative than marrying Lucia—
—and listening to you, Father
What did you say—?

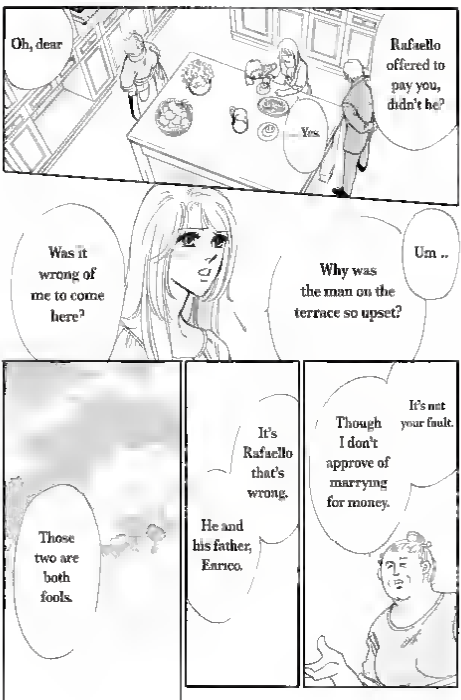
Whatever the case, I've fulfilled our deal.
Now you have to carry out your part of the bargain.
I didn't agree to this.
That woman will be a stain on the name of the Di Viscenti family!
On your mother!
Pause
If Mother was concerned with anything
...it was with our constant fighting, Father

I wonder where the kitchen is?
Ma
Ma
There, there. Hold on a little longer
Oh.
Found it!
We haven't smiled at each other in a very long time.
Rustle
Umm

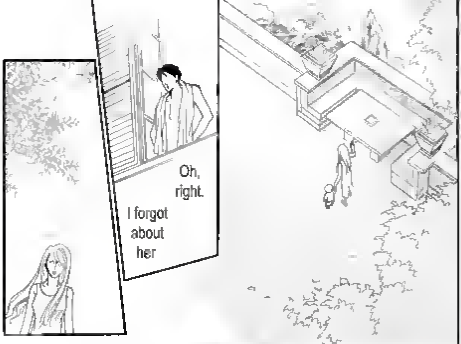

I read a guide-book with some Italian phrases last night.
I-I'm sorry We..
Umm..
If, please.
I can speak English.
Can I help you?
Phew
I'm sorry.
Umm.. If you don't mind.
..can you spare a little food and some milk for my son?

Smile!
Glance
Glance
Glance
Glance
どん!!
Boom!
Eat up.
You, too, Mom.
Here's a full pitcher of milk
Thank you so much!
I like you, too.
Your son,
No happy child's parent can be a bad person


I'm Magda.
This is Beau.
I'm Maria. My husband, Giuseppe, and I have worked here for years.
So you're what all the fuss is about, eh?
So? Is Rafaello the father?
N-No! Of course not!
Oh, really? Are you sure?
Of course! I only met him last month.
And you married him?
Oh. I... Um...


Oh, dear
Rafaello offered to pay you, didn't he?
Yes.
Um ..
Why was the man on the terrace so upset?
Was it wrong of me to come here?
It's not your fault.
Though I don't approve of marrying for money.
It's Rafaello that's wrong.
He and his father, Enrico.
Those two are both fools.

Mmm?
It's morn-ing—
Pound Pound
I can still hear shouting in my head.
What a lousy birthday
Sssss
But there's no way I'll regret it
I'll take the reins from my father as owner and go worldwide with the company!

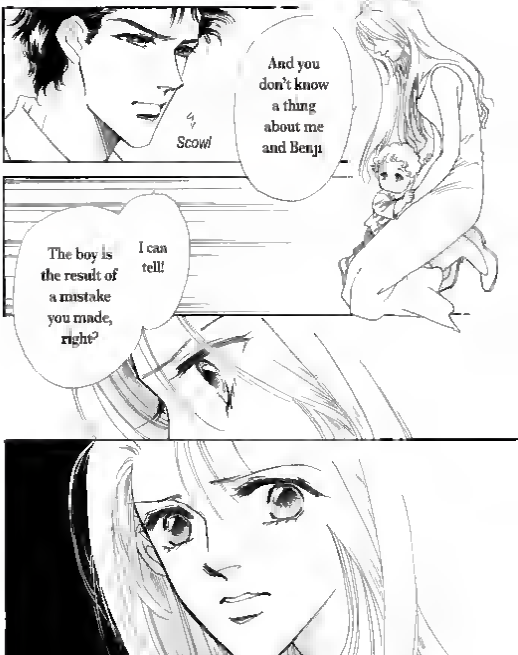

Oh, right.
I forgot about her

How did you get Rafaello to marry you?

Lucia!
Puttana! (Whore!)
With that gangly figure? Do you know some incredible technique or something?
Did you seduce him?
Um...

Go home, Lucia.
You can see I'm not going to marry you.
Rafaello ,..!
What do you see in her?
More than I see in you.
Glare
What a way to start the morning, huh?
Why do I have to let her say those things to me?

I didn't explain everything to you.
As you can tell, my family has some problems.
My father was forcing me to choose
between marriage and giving up the business.
I'm sorry for Lucia's rudeness.
She called me a whore.
I still don't like being called that.
She was speaking out of spite. Don't worry about it.
That's why I married you.
Lucia is angry because she missed out on marrying into a famous family.


Scowl
And you don't know a thing about me and Benji
I can tell!
The boy is the result of a mistake you made, right?

Squeeze
...Yes, it was a mistake.
Agreeing to marry you.
Rustle

Vroom
The company is going to be mine, just as I planned.
What am I upset about?
Why is she accusing me?
She agreed to take the £10,000, didn't she?
"You don't know a thing about me."

Damn
-!
No one has ever looked at me that way before
Vroom

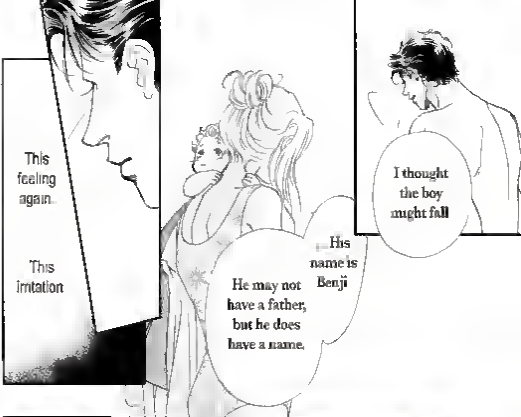
It's impossible
Welcome home, Signore
I'm a fool for getting emotional
I could tell that there was some reason behind all this
Why else would he marry someone like me?

A swim?
Oh!
Would you like some dinner?
..No. It was hot today, so I'll go for a swim.
Splash
Splash
Splash

It's tacky, out of fashion and looks terrible on her!
What a bathing suit!
So that's her smile
Hmm

We'll get out immediately!
I'm sorry! They told me we could use the pool ..!
No, it's all right.
Hmm?
Oh

Your son isn't done playing.
No, it's fine.
Let's go, Benji.
I said to stay!
Was
Was
Cringe
Look how afraid she is of me.
Am I some kind of monster?
Come on.
Uh--
Oh.
Look out!


This feeling again.
This irritation
He may not have a father, but he does have a name.
His name is Benji
I thought the boy might fall

That's no reason for Lucia to call her a whore either
It's not her fault she's wearing that bathing suit She just can't afford anything else
No
Is it at her?

Splash
Dunno
She was brought here with no explanation and then ignored
Benji
I'll have to remember that.

Rafaello
That man
Zzz
He took my breath away
I only thought of him as a cold, calculating person—
He looked so sheepish
And...
"I thought the boy might fall."

I wonder why he chose me?
If he had chosen someone more suited to this family...
...it wouldn't have caused all this trouble..
Fairy tales don t come true in real life
He won't answer your prayers
Don't be silly

Where is she?
Very good, Benji!
It means milk, Benji.
"Latte"
Laaa
(ite)
La
La

You should have breakfast out on the terrace, Magda.
I'm more comfortable here.
Am I in the way?
Not at all! We adore Benji, too.
She's getting along well with Maria and Giuseppe.
We've raised so many.
We love children.
I've even changed Rafaello's diapers.
I miss those days.
Signora was still alive and everyone got along.
She passed away?
Si, 15 years ago.

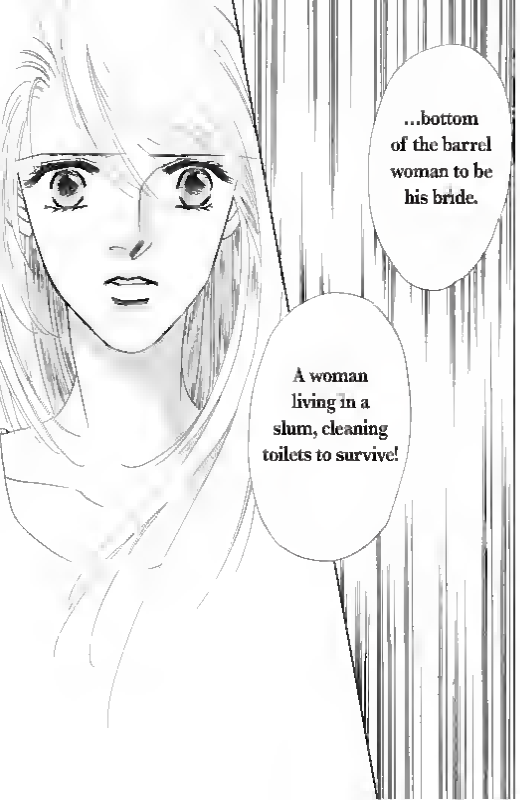
If you ask me, it's the same stubbornness in father and son!
Neither of them ever really got over Signora's death
They became awkward around each other and fought.
Finally leading up to this fuss today.
You must love them, Maria.
I love Beau, though!
I hate the both of them at the moment!
Is this your first time in Italy, Magda?
You should have Rafaello take you sightseeing.
What?

Yes, it's famous for its castle walls.
"The pearl of Tuscany!"
Lucca?
What about Lucca? It's close.
Tuscany is a great place.
I can't do that. Signore Di Visconti wouldn't want to.
The Lucca walls!
They were built at the end of the 15th century.
That's how the city stayed independent.
It was a free state, just like Venice, wasn't it?
Blink

Rafa-
ello!
Clatter
If you're that well-educated, what were you doing scrubbing toilets?
I never actually graduated
I couldn't get very much schooling.
Um
Oh, no
He was listening the whole time
I do like to read, so I borrowed many books from the library.
An orphan?
I didn't know that
...Seems there's a lot we don't know about each other
...I was an orphan.
You didn't go to school?

Come, Magda.
Bring your son, Benji.
Prepare a meal for the terrare.
Giuseppe!
Magda...
He said my name for the first time...
Rafaello
Benji's too

Father
Gasp
Clatter
Is she still here?
I want to make things clear for you.
That idiot son of mine...
...married you as an insult to me.
He specifically chose you.
An awkward, uneducated
...mannerless and utterly unrefined ..


...bottom of the barrel woman to be his bride.
A woman living in a slum, cleaning toilets to survive!

So
... that was the reason
he chose me
Waaah!
Waaah!
Waaaaah!
Harph.
Father!
Waaah!
Waa! Waah!
"Bottom of the barrel woman..."

A bottom of the barrel bride
The bottom of the barrel
There wasn't anyone worse than me
Because I would enrage his father
Waaah!
わあああん
Waaah!
That's why he chose me...!
わあああ
Waaah!

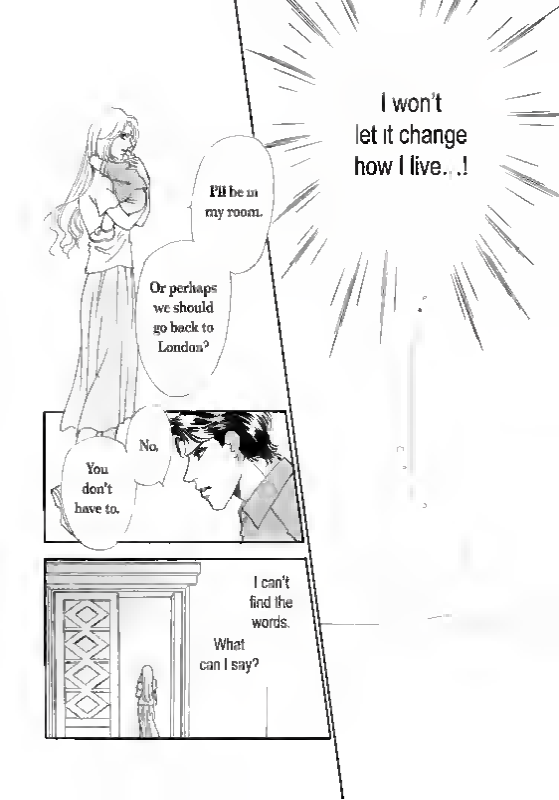
Please understand, my father is angry with me, not you.
It's all right, Signore Di Viscenti.
Magda
It's all right, Benji
The scary man is gone. Don't cry.
Waaah!
It didn't hurt my feelings.

Right

Ever since he saw the stains on my clothes after cleaning the toilet

He started off seeing me the same way as his father does

There's no shame in being poor Or in being an orphan, with no idea who your parents are
Don't feel hurt
Someone has to keep the houses of the spoiled rich people clean
Someone has to clean the toilets
Right. Don t feel hurt.


I won't let it change how I live...!
I'll be in my room.
Or perhaps we should go back to London?
No,
You don't have to.
I can't find the words.
What can I say?

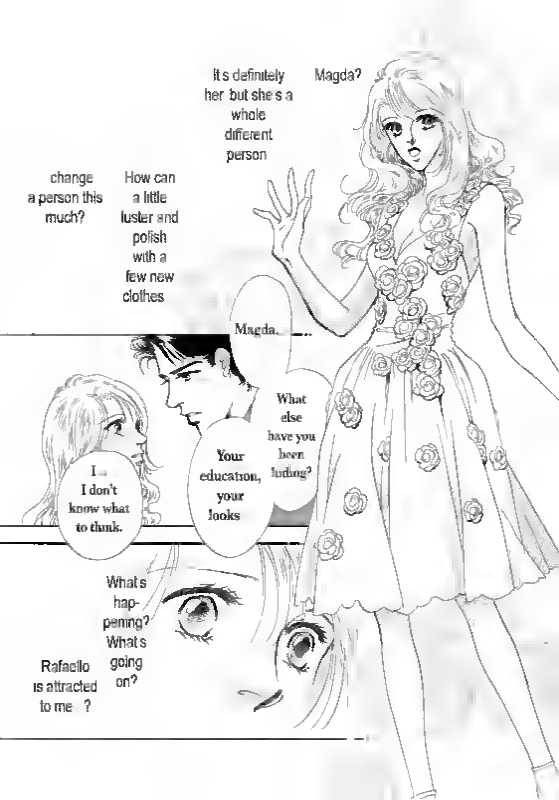
I'm the one who hurt Magda...!
Rustle
That my father was right?
"A bottom of the barrel woman."
That's why I brought Magda here?
As "the perfect bride"?

Vroom
Are you worried about leaving Benji behind?
Yes.
It's all right Maria will look after him.
Why would he suddenly ask me out for a drive?
Is he trying to make amends?
Or is he planning something else for me...?

Lucca
Oh. It's Lucca!
We can sightsee later
Come.
Welcome, Rafaello!

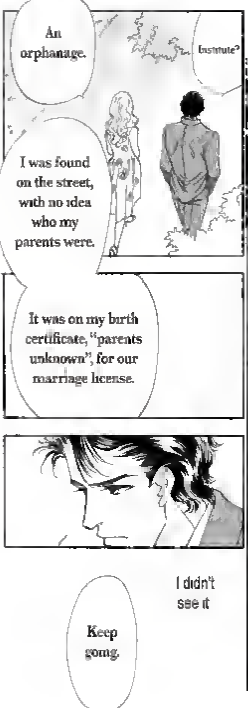
That's her?
Hello, Olivia.
Hmm— I like a challenge!
Did you prepare what I called you about this morning?
Give me a few hours!
Sigh
What am I doing?

I don't know if it's right or not.
I can't tell anymore
Oh well
Wh..
Who is this?
We're finished, Rafaello!
RRR
Ring Ring Ring


It's definitely her but she's a whole different person
Magda?
change a person this much?
How can a little luster and polish with a few new clothes
Magda...
What else have you been hiding?
Your education, your looks
I... I don't know what to think.
What's happening? What's going on?
Rafaello is attracted to me ?

His beautiful hands
Let's go for a walk.
Come.
are stronger...
and warmer than I imagined

Feel better?
Yes. Thank you.
Rustle
Rustle
Benji? He tired himself out and is taking a nap
He's fine, so just have some fun
Tell me about Benji's father.
His father
I want to know.
Thank you, Mama.

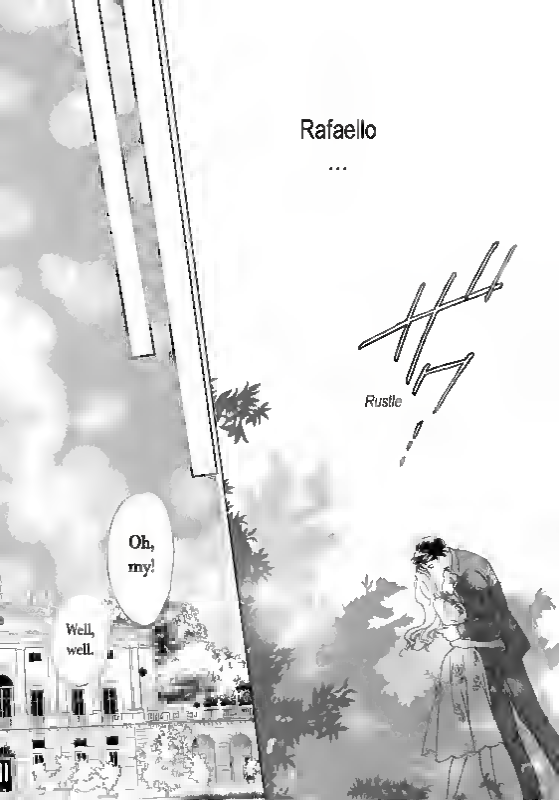

An orphanage.
Institute?
I was found on the street, with no idea who my parents were.
It was on my birth certificate, "parents unknown", for our marriage license.
Kazu...
It's complicated I'm not sure if I can explain it.
Kazu and I... met at the institute.
I didn't see it
Keep going.

I never knew my parents.
Kazu's parents were abusive.
We were always close, and did everything together.
After we found jobs, we left the orphanage and started living together
Then Kazu got very sick.
It was already too late.
Too late?
Yes.
But I kept Benji with me.

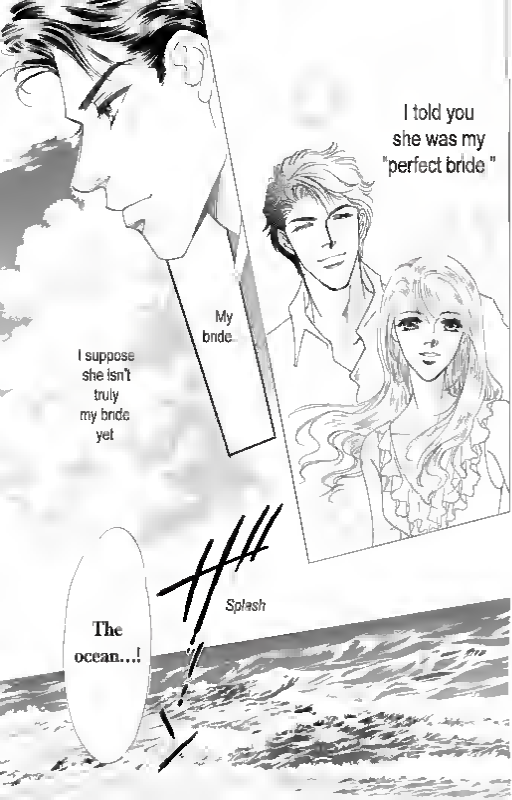
She accepted the £10 000 for her son's sake
He's the final gift I'm left with
Benji is the proof that Kazu lived.

You must think I'm a terrible person
The things I thought and said to you...
...I'm ashamed
Rafaello
...I'm sorry
Well
Drip
Drop
Drip
Drip
Drip

Magda ?
I can't stop
my tears
My feelings

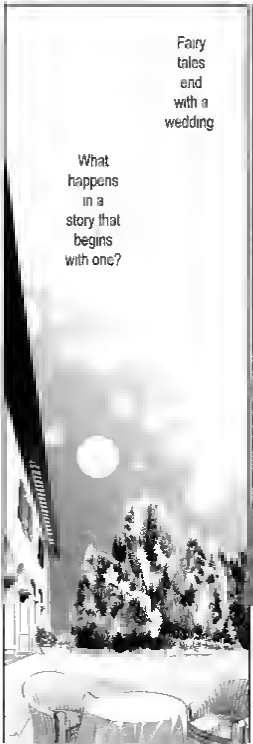

Rafaello
...
Rustle
!
Oh, my!
Well, well.

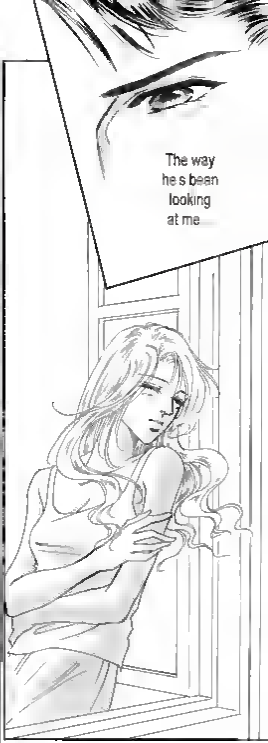
Where's my father?
He's spending some time in Rome.
Rome !
Wow
Magda is a real beauty!
I told you, didn't I?
Father will be back eventually
Once he's shocked at seeing Magda I'll say...
You're only getting Magda involved again
Why can't you stop thinking like this Rafaello?
"A bottom of the barrel woman"
I gave Magda this makeover
so that I could prove his words wrong


I told you she was my "perfect bride"
My bride
I suppose she isn't truly my bride yet
Splash
The ocean...!

Look, Benji! This is the ocean! The waves! The waves!
Ooooh
Splash
Splash
Splash
Thank you for bringing us here, Rafaello.
Benji loves it!
You're welcome
I had other reasons though
See?
No "Confounding"
She looks beautiful, as I expected

What kind of man was this Kazu...?
Too kind
Rafaello is being kind


Fairy tales end with a wedding
What happens in a story that begins with one?


The way he s been looking at me

Were you thinking about Kazu so much you didn't hear me knock?
What are you doing?
Magda. .
Rafaello!
Cara mia...
I want you so badly, it hurts.

Rafaello...
I know you can't forget about Kazu.
Kazu is a part of your heart, as Benji's father
You still have your entire life to...
What?
W-Wait!
Kazu wasn't Benji's father!
What...?
Kazu was his mother.
Moth...
Nod Nod

Slump
I'm sorry.
What a stupid mistake.
Pph
What a ridiculous mistake!
Ha ha ha ha!
I'm sorry!
Zzz
So Kazu died in childbirth, leaving Benji to you.
Trusting in you.
Yes.

Benji saved me, as well.
I could work hard because of him.
So it was your love for Benji that made you so strong.
And beautiful

Magda
Fump
W
Wait
You still have more secrets?
Um
I
I've
I've never done this before
Smile
Pause
Well
There's only one thing to do, then.

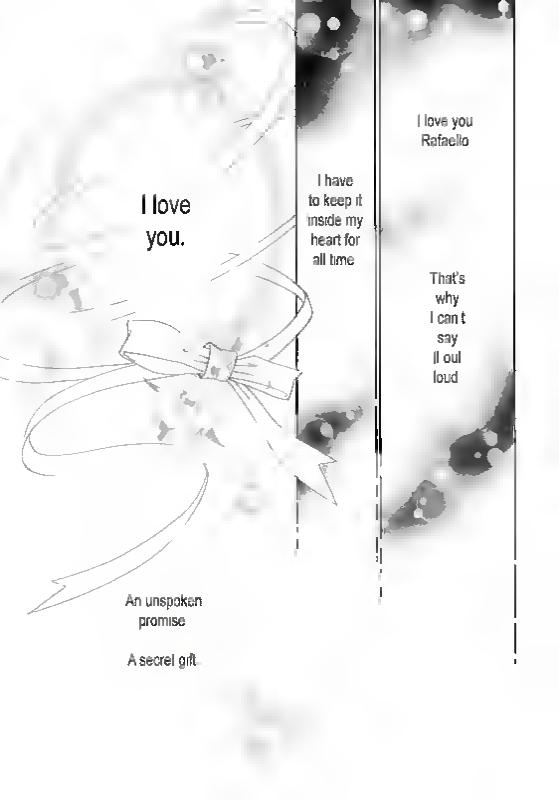
I had
no idea
Seduce
you.

His
skin
... it's
so warm
and gentle
Or is it
only because
it's Rafaello...?

Mmm...
Good morning.
Cara mia.

How nice.
Yes, very nice.

I want you to have it.
You get more beautiful every day.
Rafaello
This is too expensive.
I'm happy
I'm so happy right now
But it's only for now
The midnight bell will come to break the magic spell


I love you.
I have to keep it inside my heart for all time
I love you Rafaello
That's why I can t say ll oul loud
An unspoken promise
A secret gift

Stop the car.
Drive.
We're going back to Rome.

Lucia!
Oh!
I barely recognized you!
I've given up on becoming Rafaello's wife.
Don't get so defensive.
He said he'd seen you and Magda.
I saw him in Rome.
Besides, I'm not against you. Enrico is.
He had a smug look on his face.
I don't know.
He did? What else?
Why don't you go to Rome and ask him in person?

To Rome?
Yes. I'm going to speak with my father
Don't worry. I'm not looking for a fight.
With Rafaello gone, the house is so quiet
Knock Knock
Magda?

Enrico has had a heart attack
What?
It's bad news.
I need you to listen closely.
Magda...
Click
Lucia...
Rafaello went to see him in Rome yesterday.
They got into another fight.
And...
This marriage business is causing more damage than we thought.
It's all my fault.

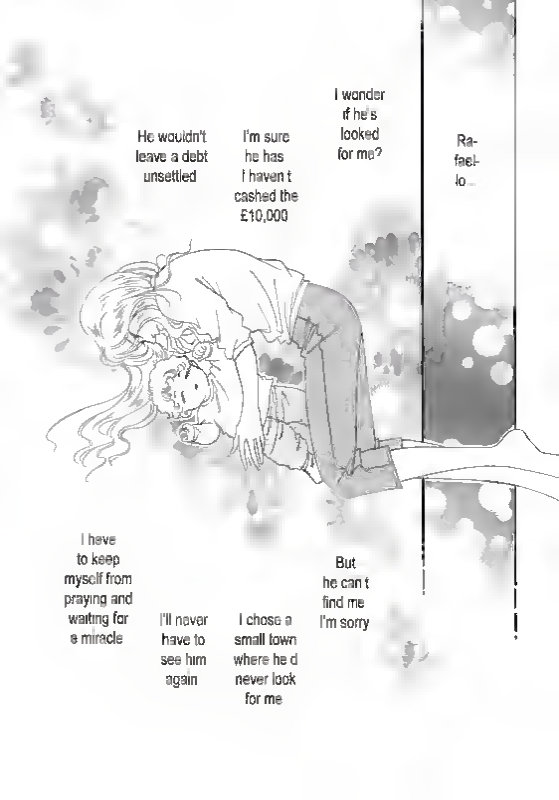
No.
Rafaello blames himself
He said it was his immature behavior that caused this.
That's why . .
...he wants to end it.
He gave me this.
It's a check for £10,000...
...and a ticket back to London.
He said he'll talk to you when it blows over.
For now.
All right?
Oh...

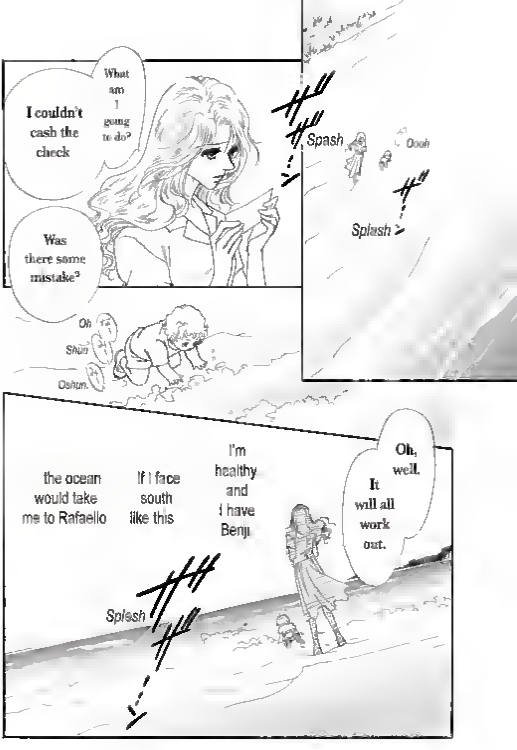
Tick
It's that time
12 o'clock
Rustle
I understand

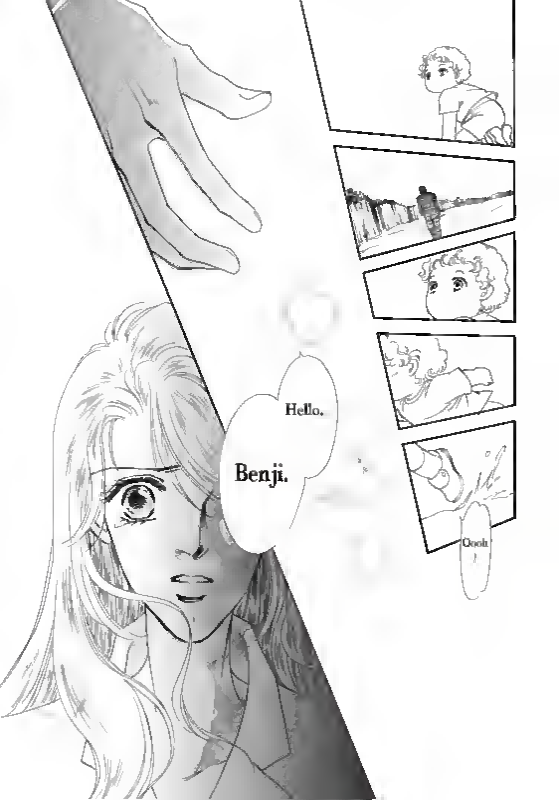
It's all right
I knew this day was coming
I have memories that I can keep in my heart forever

Coastal city somewhere in Southern England
Pour
I won't cry.

Latte Latte!
Pour
It's milk, M.I.L.K. Benji
I know you just learned the word.
It's been 2 weeks since we returned
I downgraded from business class to economy
I've been living off the difference in price
It's always raining in England
Pour
But that money is almost gone I'll have to cash this check

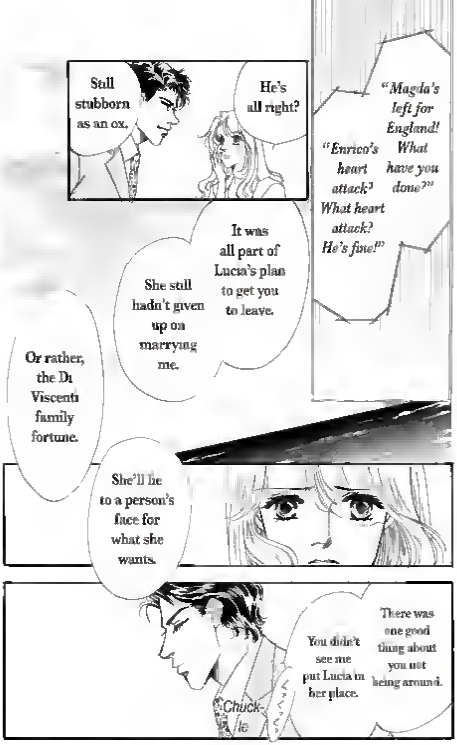

He wouldn't leave a debt unsettled
I'm sure he has I haven t cashed the £10,000
I wonder if he's looked for me?
Ra-fael-lo...
I heve to keep myself from praying and waiting for e miracle
I'll never have to see him again
I chose a small town where he d never look for me
But he can t find me I'm sorry


I couldn't cash the check
What am I going to do?
Was there some mistake?
Splash
Ouch
Splash
Oh Ya
Shim
Dohun
the ocean would take me to Rafaello
If I face south like this
I'm healthy and I have Benji
Oh, well. It will all work out.
Splash

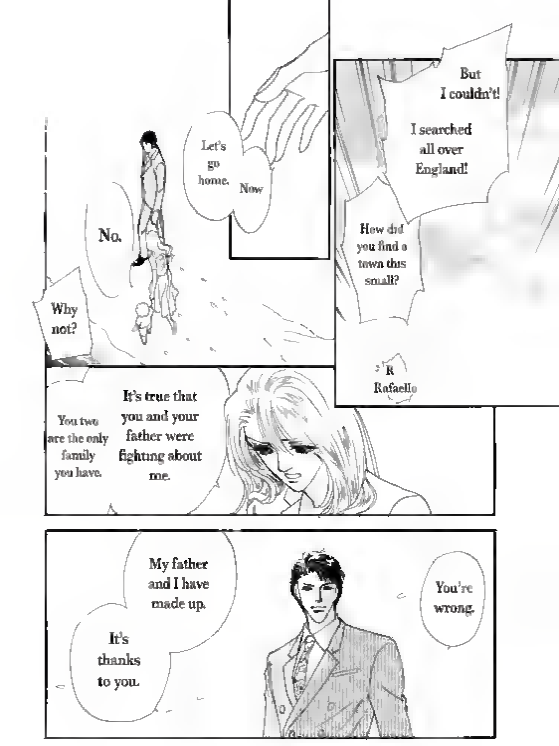

Hello,
Benji.
Oooh

Rafaello...!
Hello, *cara mia.*

Rafaello
Splash
Flap
Snatch
So this is the troublesome check.
You must know you couldn't cash it.
It's a fake.
A fake ...?
When I called that day from Rome...
Maria gave me a royal scolding.


Still stubborn as an ox.
He's all right?
"Magda's left for England! What have you done?"
"Enrico's heart attack? What heart attack? He's fine!"
It was all part of Lucia's plan to get you to leave.
She still hadn't given up on marrying me.
Or rather, the Di Viscenti family fortune.
She'll lie to a person's face for what she wants.
You didn't see me put Lucia in her place.
There was one good thing about you not being around.
Chuck-le

The check.
How did you find me?
Splash
I asked the bank to notify me if someone tried to cash it.
I had it canceled right away.
Lucia forged my signature.
Crumple
All I had to do was wait.
Eep
"I-
"I'm sor-ryyyy."


Let's go home. Now
No.
Why not?
But I couldn't! I searched all over England!
How did you find a town this small?
R Rafaello
You two are the only family you have.
It's true that you and your father were fighting about me.
My father and I have made up.
It's thanks to you.
You're wrong.

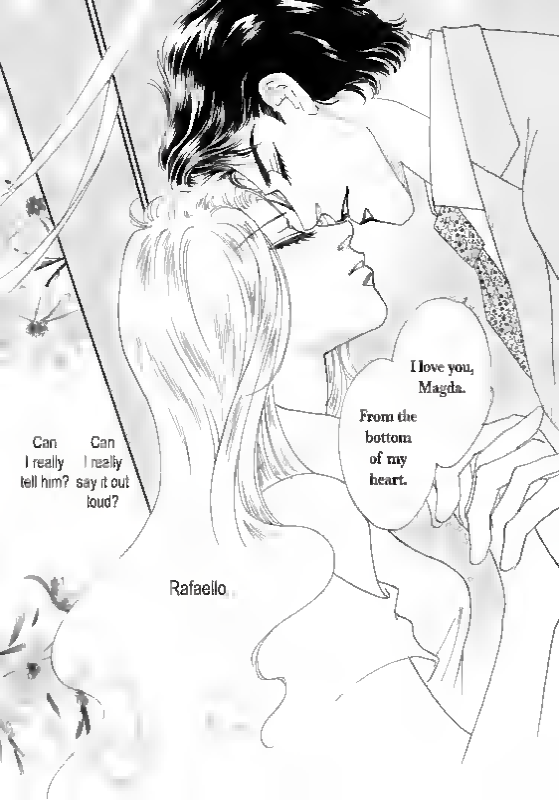
Naturally, he was flabbergasted at your change in appearance, as well.
When my father saw us in town
he remembered something he'd forgotten for a long time.
This is my mother's eternity ring.
My father gave it to her, vowing his eternal love.
I want you to have it.
I, Rafaello Di Viscenti, pledge you my eternal..
Himself, and his love for my mother and me.

No.
Why?
Be-
cause
I can't
believe in
a miracle
like this!
You
waved
a magic
wand over
me.
The time
I spent
with you
was like
a dream.
That
memory
is enough
for me!
It doesn't
have to
be only a
memory!
We have
a future
to look
forward to!

Magda,
Can't you see that *you're* the true miracle?
You and Benji created a miracle between me and my father.
I think you're the one who cast a spell over me.
Since I first met you...
...I've been feeling that magic get stronger

Before I knew it, I couldn't stop thinking about you
I was always searching for you
And I can't keep from holding you
Rafaello...

Oh,
Rafaello
This dream won't ever end...


I love you, Magda.
From the bottom of my heart.
Can I really say it out loud?
Can I really tell him?
Rafaello

I love you,
too.

The magic has become days filled with light.

Shojo-Manhwa Scans

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